



# The Poor Bugger's Tool: Irish Modernism, Queer Labor, and Postcolonial History

*Patrick R. Mullen*

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With the weakening moral authority of the Catholic Church, the boom ushered in by the Celtic Tiger, and the slow but steady diminishment of the Troubles in the North, Ireland has finally stepped out from the shadows of colonial oppression onto the world stage as a major cosmopolitan country. Taking its title from a veiled reference to Roger Casement—the humanitarian and Irish patriot hanged for treason—in James Joyce's *Ulysses*, *The Poor Bugger's Tool* demonstrates how the affective labor of Irish queer culture might contribute to a progressive new national image for the Republic and Northern Ireland.

Looking back to the first wave of Irish modernism in the works of Wilde, Synge, Casement, and Joyce, Patrick Mullen reveals how these authors deployed queer aesthetics to shape inclusive forms of national affiliation as well as to sharpen anti-imperialist critiques. In its second half, the monograph turns its attention to Ireland's postmodernist boom in the works of Patrick McCabe, Neil Jordan, and Jamie O'Neill. With readings of *The Butcher Boy*, *Breakfast on Pluto*, and *At Swim Two Boys*, Mullen shows that queer sensibilities and style remain key cultural resources for negotiating the political and economic realities of globalization at the turn of the twenty-first century.

Buttressed by writings of theorists like Marx, Foucault, and Antonio Negri, *The Poor Bugger's Tool* brings Irish literature into a fruitful dialog with queer theory, postcolonial studies, the history of sexuality, and modernist aesthetics.

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